

Ohio Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee
Opposition Testimony on SB 215
Submitted by Laura Robertson-Boyd
December 13, 2021

To Chair Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 215 today. My name is Laura Robertson-Boyd. I live in Columbus, Ohio, and I am a volunteer with the Ohio Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. We are a grassroots movement of Americans of all backgrounds fighting for public safety measures that respect the Second Amendment while protecting us from gun violence. Moms Demand Action is part of Everytown for Gun Safety, the largest gun violence prevention organization in the country with more than 6 million supporters.

We are here today to again oppose a dangerous permitless carry bill which would jeopardize public safety in Ohio. Ohioans support the current permit system and overwhelmingly oppose making it legal to carry a hidden, loaded handgun in public without a permit or safety training. Under this bill, a person could buy a gun - which in Ohio does not require a criminal background check if not buying from a federally licensed dealer - and then, without any further vetting or any safety training, immediately carry that loaded gun down the street around our children and families. At the same time, law enforcement would lose a critical tool for stopping people with dangerous histories from carrying concealed guns in public. That is why law enforcement officers have opposed attempts to pass permitless carry here in Ohio and across the country. We agree with them when they note that this would interfere with their ability to enforce the law and keep people with dangerous histories from carrying guns in public.

There is no legitimate public safety reason for dismantling our current permit system. Supporters of this legislation falsely claim that it will reduce crime, and that in the few states that have moved to a permitless carry system, it hasn't become the "wild west." But facts matter, and we know that states that have enacted permitless carry laws have seen substantial increases in firearm-related crimes. For example, since 2003, when Alaska became the first state to enact permitless carry legislation, the rate of aggravated assaults committed with a firearm in that state has increased by 92% in 2020 [1,2]. Since Arizona enacted permitless carry legislation in 2010, the rate of aggravated assaults committed with a firearm in that state has increased by 52% in 2019 [3,4]. That increase represents 1,776 more gun-related aggravated assaults committed in 2019 than in 2010.

According to a report from the National Bureau of Economic Research, "The most frequent occurrence involving crime and a good guy with a gun is not self-defense but rather the theft of the good guy's gun, which occurs hundreds of thousands of times each year.... As Michael

Rallings, the top law enforcement official in Memphis, Tennessee, noted in commenting on the problem of guns being stolen from cars: ‘Laws have unintended consequences. We cannot ignore that as a legislature passes laws that make guns more accessible to criminals, that has a direct effect on our violent crime rate’” [5]. **And in fact, data shows that states that have passed permitless carry legislation are experiencing a substantial increase in gun violence** with an 11 percent increase in handgun homicide rates [6] and a 13-15 percent increase in violent crime rates [5].

Thus, we know that SB 215 would increase, rather than decrease, the number of firearms-related crimes in Ohio, making Ohioans less safe. This bill is dangerous for Ohio. Moms Demand Action supports the ability of law-abiding citizens to carry a concealed handgun in public, but we believe they should undergo a background check, get a permit, and undergo training to do so. It’s a simple system that keeps us all safe. We urge you to vote against this bill.

Thank you,

Laura Robertson-Boyd
Columbus Local Group Lead
Ohio Chapter Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

1. Crime Reported in Alaska 2003. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Statewide Services. <https://bit.ly/2Hy475w>. Rates were calculated using population data from the United States Census Bureau.
2. Crime in Alaska 2020. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Statewide Services. <https://tinyurl.com/9uc96aay>. Rates were calculated using population data from the United States Census Bureau.
3. Crime in Arizona, 2010. Phoenix, Arizona: Arizona Department of Public Safety. <https://bit.ly/2Uffq3Q>. Rates were calculated using population data from the United States Census Bureau.
4. Crime in Arizona, 2019. Phoenix, Arizona: Arizona Department of Public Safety. <https://tinyurl.com/ek2ucrvy>. Rates were calculated using population data from the United States Census Bureau.
5. 6. John J. Donohue, Abhay Aneja, and Kyle D. Weber, “Right-To-Carry Laws and Violent Crime: A Comprehensive Assessment Using Panel Data and a State-Level Synthetic Control Analysis,” NBER Working Papers (National Bureau of Economic Research, November 2018), https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w23510/w23510.pdf
6. Michael Siegel, et al., “Easiness of Legal Access to Concealed Firearm Permits and Homicide Rates in the United States,” *American Journal of Public Health* 107, no. 12 (December 1, 2017): 1923–29, <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2017.304057>